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Kidnapping Olympus

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KIDNAPPING OLYMPUS

Kate E. Asche

Winner of the Academy of American Poets Contest, 2003.

Gathering the tribe of elders, she begins
to destroy them in that rapacious way

she always does. Without her armor,
passive

among gluttons, content to steer upwind
while twitching

some twisted thing or another—
that's Athena for you.

She's so soothing and ash-colored—
drives you nuts;

soon you're talking to eight-eyed stars
hanging somewhere in the music of her flute, awaiting

the wisdom to tame Pegasus
for the sake of an airborne prank.

For, among those six days of creation,
there is kept a bald secret; in her helpful way,

Athena knows, and—no—not even you
will ever drag it from her.

She accepts no Hindu dancing girl,
no Spanish measurements,

but she'll tell you if she pleases.
Still, none

of your winged attempts can touch her—she is snowy
to us, even as we, such an undefined people, overflow.